

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) In a computer system that is network connectable along with one or more other computer systems to a network, a method for determining if an attachment is to be deleted in response to a deletion command requesting deletion of a corresponding electronic message, the method comprising:

- an act of receiving an electronic message, the electronic message including:

- a message body;

- an attachment attached to the message body, the attachment storing attachment data associated with the electronic message; and

- a coupling field indicating if the attachment data is coupled to or decoupled from the message body, coupling to the message body indicating that the attachment data is to be deleted along with the message body when the message body is deleted, decoupling from the message body indicating that the attachment data is to be retained when the electronic message is deleted;

- an act of storing the message body in a message silo of a database, the message body being stored along with one or more other message items defined in accordance with a message schema;

- an act of storing the attachment in a document silo of the database;

- an act of maintaining a link between the attachment in the document silo and the electronic message in the message silo such that the message body and the attachment remain related as electronic message data even though they are stored in different silos;

- an act of receiving a delete command requesting deletion of the electronic message;

- an act of deleting the message body in response to and_in accordance with the received delete command;

an act of automatically referring to the coupling field included in the electronic message in response to the delete command to determine if the attachment data is to be deleted along with the message body or if the attachment data is to be retained based on whether the attachment data is coupled to or decoupled from the message body respectively; and

an act of processing the attachment data in accordance with the indication in the coupling field included in the electronic message based on the reference to the coupling field included in the electronic message.

2. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the act of receiving an electronic message comprises an act of receiving electronic message selected from among an electronic mail message, an instant message, a fax message, a news group posting, a voice message, and a blog entry.

3. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the act of receiving electronic message comprises an act of receiving an electronic message defined in accordance with one or more extension schemas.

4. (Cancelled).

5. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the attachment attached to the electronic message includes an attachment metadata field, the attachment metadata field storing message related data associated with the electronic message such that if the electronic message is deleted message related data associated the electronic message can nonetheless be returned in response to a query.

6-7. (Cancelled).

8. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the act of receiving a delete command requesting deletion of the electronic message comprises an act of receiving a delete command that originated at a user message application.

9. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the act of deleting the electronic message in accordance with the received delete command comprises an act of deleting the message body from a message silo of a database.

10. (Cancelled).

11. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the act of referring to the coupling field included in the electronic message to determine if the attachment is to be deleted comprises an act of referring to the coupling field to determine that the attachment is to be retained in response to the delete command.

12. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the act of referring to the coupling data field included in the electronic message to determine if the attachment is to be deleted comprises an act of referring to the coupling field to determine that the attachment is to be deleted along with the message body in response the delete command.

13. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 11, wherein:

the act of deleting the message body in response to and in accordance with the received delete command comprise an act of deleting the message body from a message silo of a database in response to the delete command; and

the act of processing the attachment data in accordance with the indication in the coupling field of the electronic message based on the reference to the coupling field comprises an act of retaining the attachment in a document silo of the database based on the reference to the coupling field.

14. (Previously Presented) In a computer system that is network connectable along with one or more other computer systems to a network, a method for identifying an attachment in response to a message related query, the method comprising:

- an act of receiving an electronic message, the electronic message including:

- a message body;

- an attachment attached to the message body, the attachment storing attachment data associated with the electronic message; and

- a coupling field indicating that the attachment data is decoupled from the message body, decoupling from the message body indicating that the attachment data is to be retained when the electronic message is deleted;

- an act of storing the message body in a message silo of a database, the message body being stored along with one or more other message items defined in accordance with a message schema;

- an act of storing the attachment in a document silo of the database;

- an act of maintaining a link between the attachment in the document silo and the electronic message in the message silo such that the message body and the attachment remain related as electronic message data even though they are stored in different silos;

- an act of receiving a delete command to delete the electronic message; in response to the delete command:

- an act of deleting the message body; and

- an act of retaining the attachment based on the indication in the coupling field included in the electronic message;

- an act of receiving a query for message related data that satisfies query criteria subsequent to deletion of the message body;

- an act of identifying the retained attachment as message related data that satisfies the query criteria notwithstanding that the message body was deleted prior to receiving the query; and

- an act of returning at least a link to the attachment in response to the query.

15. (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, wherein the act of receiving a query for message related data that satisfies query criteria comprises an act of receiving a query that originated at a user message application.

16-17 (Cancelled).

18. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 14, wherein the act of returning at least a link to the attachment in response to the query comprises an act of returning a link that can be represented by an icon or hyperlink at a user message application.

19. (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, wherein the act of returning at least a link to the attachment in response to the query comprises an act of returning the attachment in response to the query.

20. (Previously Presented) A computer program product for use in a computer system that is network connectable along with one or more other computer systems to a network, the computer program product for determining if an attachment is to be deleted in response to a deletion command requesting deletion of a corresponding electronic message, the computer program product comprising one or more physical storage media having stored thereon computer-executable instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the computer system to perform the following:

- receive an electronic message, the electronic message including

 - a message body;

 - an attachment attached to the message body, the attachment storing attachment data associated with the electronic message; and

 - a coupling field indicating if the attachment data is coupled to or decoupled from the message body, coupling to the message body indicating that the attachment data is to be deleted along with the message body when the message body is deleted, decoupling from the message body indicating that the attachment data is to be retained when the electronic message is deleted;

 - store the message body in a message silo of a database, the message body being stored along with one or more other message items defined in accordance with a message schema;

 - store the attachment in a document silo of the database;

 - maintain a link between the attachment in the document silo and the electronic message in the message silo such that the message body and the attachment remain related as electronic message data even though they are stored in different silos;

 - receive a delete command requesting deletion of the electronic message;

 - delete the message body in response to and in accordance with the received delete command; and

 - refer to the coupling field included in the attachment to determine if the attachment data is to be deleted along with the message body or if the attachment data is to be retained based on whether the attachment data is coupled to or decoupled from the message body in response to receiving the delete command.

21. (Previously Presented) A computer program product for use in a computer system that is network connectable along with one or more other computer systems to a network, the computer program product for identifying an attachment in response to a message related query, the computer program product comprising one or more physical storage media having stored thereon computer-executable instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the computer system to perform the following:

- receive an electronic message, the electronic message including:

 - a message body;

 - an attachment attached to the message body, the attachment storing attachment data associated with the electronic message; and

 - a coupling field indicating that the attachment data is decoupled from the message body, decoupling from the message body indicating that the attachment data is to be retained when the electronic message is deleted;

 - store the message body in a message silo of a database, the message body being stored along with one or more other message items defined in accordance with a message schema;

 - store the attachment in a document silo of the database;

 - maintain a link between the attachment in the document silo and the electronic message in the message silo such that the message body and the attachment remain related as electronic message data even though they are stored in different silos;

 - receive a delete command to delete the electronic message;

 - in response to the delete command:

 - delete the message body;

 - retain the attachment;

 - receive a query for message related data that satisfies query criteria subsequent to deletion of the message body;

 - identify the attachment as message related data that satisfies the query criteria notwithstanding that the message body was deleted prior to receiving the query; and

 - return at least a link to the attachment in response to the query.

22. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the coupling field being included in the electronic message comprises the coupling field being included in the attachment